Roxbury, March 29, 1878.

My dear Wendell:

I believe I have not written to you since the receipt of your letter, advising me to go to Newburyport, and make some further explorations in regard to my birth, &c. The result of my visit was, that I found myself mistaken in supposing, by the handwriting, that it was my father who recorded my birth in the town records; for, though the writing was remarkably like my father's, yet, on a careful examination, no room was left for doubt that the entry was made by the town clerk. This helps to remove a difficulty that was somewhat formidable.

Moreover, I found that the town records at that time were kept in a very loose and disjointed manner, furnishing ample scope for blunders as to dates.

Again: I found that the birth of my youngest sister was recorded to have taken place July 3d, 1808. This, I think, strongly increases the probability that I was born in December, 1805, and not 1804. Her name was entered as Elizabeth Knowlton, and not as Maria Elizabeth, as I had supposed.

Wishing to ascertain something about my father's sea-going voyages, I went to the Public Library, and carefully examined the files of the Newburyport Herald from April, 1804, to April, 1808—covering the whole period, and more, of his residence in Newbury-

port; but, to my surprise and perplexity, I could find no mention or trace of him, either as sailing from that port or any other. My search was minute and laborious, running through the entire shipping list of each number of the Herald for that long period. How this enigma is to be solved I cannot imagine.

And, moreover, it is still a puzzle to me how it came to pass that for thirty years I always supposed and reckoned that I was born in December, 1804; thus terminating my apprenticeship and reaching my supposed majority upon that calculation; neither the Farnhams in whose house I was born, and with whom I lived so many years, nor the Bartletts with whom I boarded for a long period, and by whom I was duly

apprenticed, ever giving me to understand that I was antedating the time of my birth. Still, the farewell letters of my father and mother to his parents, at Granville, N.S. written in April, 1805, announcing their intention to remove to Newburyport, to spend there the remainder of their days, seem to me to dominate and subordinate all other dates and calculations as to when I came into "this breathing world." But, while it is of no consequence, it is at least slightly annoying to have any uncertainty about my advent.

Miss Whitney, who made the admirable and colossal ~~bust~~ statue of Samuel Adams, which is now in the national capitol, has well-nigh completed a bust of me, which promises to be very satisfactory.

Your loving Father.